

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/531,913
Response to Office Action dated February 22, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are pending in this application, of which claim 1 has been amended. No new claims have been added.

Claims 1 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication US 2003/0194897 to Nishioka (hereafter, "Nishioka").

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Nishioka discloses a card connector apparatus that can prevent forced removal of a card at a predetermined mounting position and transmission of a force exerted when trying to pull the card out by force to a locking mechanism. An apparatus of this invention includes a slider, an ejection spring, a locking mechanism for the slider including a heart-shaped cam groove and a latch-pin, an engaging member, that is, a leaf spring, provided on the slider, and a fixed portion, for example, a shoulder 21, with which an end portion of the leaf spring engages when a compact memory card is in a state of being held at a predetermined mounting position, and an attempt is made to move the compact memory card in the ejecting direction, that is, toward the insertion port, the shoulder being formed on a housing.

The Examiner urges that shoulder 21 corresponds to first rib 730 in the instant application.

Applicants respectfully disagree.

The present invention prevents a card from popping out when the card is discharged, while Nishioka intends to prevent forced removal of an inserted card.

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In the present invention, a slider is movable from a card insertion position to a card discharging position, and further to a card pop-out prevention position. When the slider is positioned at the card pop-out prevention position, the tip end of a lock spring mounted on the slider abuts a first rib provided in the base so that it is prevented from being displaced in a direction away from the card. In such configuration, the tip end of the lock spring is held engaged with a recess of the card placed in the card pop-out prevention position, so that the engagement can prevent the card from popping out during ejection.

This is in contrast to Nishioka, in which a slider 14 is movable only from the predetermined card mounting position (i.e., card insertion position) to a card discharging position and is not movable beyond the card discharging position to a card pop-out prevention position.

Further, in Nisioka, if the card placed in the card insertion position is pulled out by force, the end portion 20 of a leaf spring 18 is pressed by the edge of a recess 4 of a memory card 3 and displaced in a direction away from the card so as to be engaged with the shoulder 21. Thus, a projection 19 of the spring 18 is held engaged with a recess 4 of the card 3, so that the engagement can prevent the card in the card insertion position from being pulled out by force (see paragraphs [0062] and [0080] of Nishioka.

Therefore, the shoulder 21 in Nishioka contributes to prevention of forced removal of the memory card placed in the card insertion position, and does not contribute to prevention of pop-out of the card during ejection, unlike the first rib of the present invention.

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Although shoulder 21 of Nishioka may prevent lateral displacement of the end portion 20 of a leaf spring 18 by engaging with the end portion 20, because such lateral displacement contributes to prevention of forced pullout of the memory card placed in the card insertion position, it is respectfully submitted that shoulder 21 in Nishioka does not correspond to first rib 130 and 730 of the instant application

Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to recite this distinction.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 2 and 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully defer this action until a FINAL Office Action, if any, is received.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-4, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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